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ABSTRACT

The document presents a brief historical background leading to the development of career counseling services at Delaware State College. It includes the philosophy of career planning at the college which encourages the black student to investigate career opportunities during his freshman year so that four years of career exploration leads to meaningful job placement. Also investigated are current business and industrial trends to steer black students toward a usable career. Mechanisms of vocational counseling are discussed and five methods are listed: (1) a career conference workshop; (2) an individual counseling interview; (3) a testing program; (4) an occupational information library; and (5) followup of recent graduates' job experiences. The final section of the paper deals with the development of specific career educational programs (such as an interview workshop, student on and off campus employment service, on campus government testing) to increase career awareness, stimulate motivation and increase sophistication in the interview situation. (Author/MC)

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Developing Career Counseling Services at a Predominately Black College: Implications for more Effective Programs for Black Students at "White" Colleges or Universities

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CG 005 651

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Background

I believe that it is important at the onset of our presentation to provide our audience with some background material pertinent to the institution we represent. I do so with the belief that knowledge about black colleges and universities is extremely limited on the part of my white colleagues for most of them have never set foot on a black campus.

Delaware State College, founded almost eighty years ago as a college for "colored students," is located in central Delaware. The state of Delaware has two institutions of higher learning, the University of Delaware, a white institution, with an enrollment of about 7,000 less than 100 of whom are black and Delaware State College with an enrollment of roughly 1,300. Presently, Delaware State's enrollment is approximately 60% black and 40% non-black.

Since 1966, the white student enrollment has increased rapidly. This increase in white enrollment, plus a current building program, has brought an increase in funds from the state. One result has been the reorganization of the student personnel services at the college. The Career Planning and Placement Office has been created as a part of this reorganization. The formation of the Career Planning and Placement Office was encouraged by an evaluation of the placement office by College Placement Services (CPS). This evaluation brought to the campus a new philosophy in the area of Career Planning.

For those who do not know, CPS is a privately financed advisory group for predominately black colleges and universities who wish aid in developing their Career Planning and Placement Programs.

CPS visited Delaware State College in October 1966. At that time the Career Planning function was handled by the Director of Student Personnel Services in addition to several other duties performed by his office. The CPS evaluative report recommended that the placement office be established as a separate entity. This recommendation was followed, and in September 1967 the college hired its first full-time placement officer. The placement officer, whose background was in counseling, developed a new Career Planning philosophy on campus.

In Septmeber 1967 the office moved to the then new Student Center. For the first month the office existed in name only. There was no telephone, no full-time clerical assistance and little office furniture. Step by step the administration had to be convinced of the importance of the program and the needs of the new office. Luckily, the college reorganization had placed the placement office directly under the Dean of the College. The Dean believed in the usefulness of the program, and with his help the President was persuaded to give more support to the function. The President attempted to implement the recommendations of the CPS report whenever possible. As a result the office was able to utilize the report in promoting the placement program.

By October 1967 a full-time secretary plus two part-time students were employed in the office, and the administration alloted $1,000 for office furniture. This was only about 40% of what the CPS report had suggested for furnishings. Things were beginning to move, however, and in the spring of 1968 the format of the career conference was changed. The college had held careers programs for fourteen consecutive years, which gives an indication that Delaware State at least had had some exposures to career planning.

Monies to run the career planning program that first year were administered by the Dean of the College. It was promised that during that year the office would have its own budget. The office then begin its second year of operation with a budget of more than $35,000 dollars, roughly 30% of which was provided by a Title III grant from the Office of Education. The fiscal year 1969-70 saw our office begin operation with a budget of more than $40,000 dollars, 20% of which was provided by other than state funds. In September 1968, an Assistant Placement Director was added to the staff. In 1969 another staff member designated as a Placement Program Coordinator was added to the staff. With the additon of staff members has come an extension of services offered. The additional staff and the impact that additional services have had on the campus will be discussed in more detail by Mrs. Carney and Mr. Mims.

From a strictly monetary sense there has been a dramatic change in administrative attitude since September 1967.

Budget increases, accompanied by staff and services increase, have transformed a once empty meeting room into the most frequented office on campus.

In this brief background about the development of our Career counseling office I have tried to pull out what I believe are essential ingredients for a successful program. The ingredients are a felt need for change in the area, a catalyst (in this case the CPS evaluative report) to promote change, administrative and adequate financial support. In the case of Delaware State College the first two ingredients existed prior to 1967. The latter two ingredients however, had to be earned through the development of a program which included the faculty and pertinent staff members, as well as students.

One other factor leading to the development of the office at Delaware is the uniqueness of the curriculum offered at the college. Whereas most black colleges have been and still are teacher training institutions, Delaware has had a growing Business Administration and Economics Department. In June of this year 40 students with majors in business administration or accounting will graduate. Because of this business orientation training our graduates are able to move fairly easily into business and industry and since there are no examination requirements for most accounting majors in the federal government, this group of students can easily move in that direction also.

This then is a brief historical statement of the events leading to the development of career counseling services at Delaware State.

The remaining portion of our program will detail the services we are presently providing. Remaining statements will also include an analysis of our interview summaries. We will complete our presentation with some conclusions taken from our experiences at the college, and we will look into the future of the program.

Philosophy of Career Planning

Historically, the function of Career Planning began at Delaware State College in September, 1967. Heretofore, placement had been that activity that dealt exclusively with seniors in relation to job screening and selection. The concept of Career Planning originated from the demonstrated need of students to be more cognizant of the influences that are instrumental in the eventual decision making process after college, be it career oriented or continuing education. Career planning emerged as a systematic investigation of the dynamic influences that effect value priorities as they directly relate to the formulation of a course of action. Career planning consists of a decision making triode: First, the individual must internalize his goals, assess his abilities, and crystalize his needs. Secondly, to facilitate a course of action, a determination process must be establish whereby the individual investigates all possibilities within a specific frame of reference. The third aspect of the decision making triode constitutes the actualization of the individual's goals, abilities and needs.

At a predominently black institution the Office of Career Planning and Placement attempts to meet the needs of black students in the ever changing world of work. Traditionally, black students were limited to the "Teaching, Preaching, Medicine" career fields.

As the great diversity of career opportunities opens-up to black students a career oriented chasm became apparent. This chasm was the direct result of ethnic inexperience and/or lack of exposure to non-traditional career fields.

Concurrent with the demand for "black professional types", the placement function at black institutions must broaden its point of view in an attempt to better prepare black students for realistic occupational choices. At Delaware State College, the philosophy of career planning entails the preparation of the student for the eventualities he will face after college, be he drop-out or graduate. The black student is encouraged to investigate career opportunities as early as his freshman year, thereby encompassing the realities of occupational choice within the framework of the total educational experience. The student is exposed to the world of work and those facets that influence change. By exposing black students to occupational trends at this early stage, the career planning function can orientate the student to an on going career exploration activity that culminates four years later with his actual placement in a meaningful work experience.

The organizational structure of the Career Planning and Placement service at Delaware State reflect this current philosophy. Educational placement and special programs are handled by one staff member who works through the four years with the students who are interested in this area.

Vocational counseling and industrial recruitment is established as a separate function and is designed as a four year continuous activity. The last function consists of general vocational counseling, graduate school placement, and overall supervision. This gives structure and direction to the entire Career Planning and Placement Service. The following section will deal with the mechanisms of Career Planning and Placement as an on going process in Business and Industrial recruitment.

Business and Industrial Trends

The make-up of the types of recruiting concerns that visit Delaware State College covers the entire world of work. This year over two hundred business, industrial, and governement agencies will recruit on campus. Based on the 1969 Fortune Directory, of the five hundred largest U. S. industrial corporations, seventy-two (72) recruit on our campus; of the fifty largest commercial banks, six recruit; of the fifty largest life insurance companies, thirteen of the top twenty recruit on campus. Of the fifty largest retailing concerns, ten recruit on campus; of the fifty largest utilities companies, five recruit at Delaware State.

The diversity of recruiting can be shown by the fact that of all recruiting activity twenty-one percent represents government agencies. The next highest category, banking, finance and insurance, constitutes seventeen percent of activity.

Chemicals, drugs, and allied products make up the third most frequent industry with twelve percent representation. Electronics/instruments and petroleum products are the next two categories with eight percent each. The following industries are represented in significantly smaller percentages; accounting/public, food and beverage processing, glass and paper/packing, merchandising, tire and rubber products, and utilities range between six and two percent.

The projection of recruitment activity for the next three years promises to improve. During the current year, most recruitment activity is feeling the economic squeeze, resulting in manpower cut-backs and a decrease in recruiting efforts. However, at Delaware State College the recruiting activity has flourished. The few cancellations that were attributed to the economic cut-back were government and defense oriented concerns. But with the initial visit of new companies and government agencies, the overall economic picture has not affected our recruiting activity. In fact, there was four percent increase in on campus visits from the previous year.

As a result of recruiting activity trends, how can we better prepare black students to meet the needs and demands of the world of work? We know from employer data surveys of organizations that recruit on our campus what is needed in the way of educational requirements for entry-level jobs. Business administration and accounting is by far the most frequently requested academic background. The next most frequently requested majors are those in economics and mathmatics. These two groups constitute over sixty-five percent of the total request.

However, this is not a deterrent factor for students in other academic areas desiring to enter business and industry. The emergence of the industry-wide broad base career development programs affords the general liberal arts graduate ample opportunity to enter the business field and gain a wealth of varied experiences within a specific industry.

Another persuasive factor that has to be taken in consideration when we attempt to prepare black students for realistic career choice is the current shifting of interest. As a career field, teacher education was formerly the most prominent for students at black institutions. Based on data from graduate follow-up surveys at Delaware State College there is a shifting of interest for the black college graduates. For example there was a 6.2 percent decrease in the number of Delaware State graduates that actually entered the educational field in 1969 (43.8%) as compared with the 1968 graduate figures (50%). On the other hand, the percentage of graduates going into business and industry has increased by 8.5% over the same one year period from 16.3% in 1968 to 24.8% in 1969. Also, in conjunction with these graduate placement figures, the number of students pursuing degrees in these respective academic departments has follow the same shifting trend. As already mentioned the Business Administration department is the largest (in number of students pursuing degrees) department on the campus, while three years ago education claimed three fourths (3/4) of all degree pursuing students.

From the aforementioned business and industrial recruitment trends, we can surmise that our black students are going into the business world in ever increasing numbers. The major task then becomes to prepare the black student to compete in the labor market for these "new jobs." With this challange, the theory of career planning becomes the day-to-day relationship of placement official to student.

Mechanisms of Career Planning (Vocational Counseling)

Putting career planning into practice results in instituting several procedural innovations seldom present in most black placement functions. During the last three years these activities have become synonymous with the mechanisms for effective career planning at Delaware State College.

In October of the academic year, the career conference is the major endeavor in the career planning scheme. The career conference is a venture to expand the occupational outlook of college freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, as well as, seniors. High school participation has also been invited and encouraged. This program affords students the opportunity to interact with people who are working in traditional, as well as, non-traditonal jobs, and consultants of major businesses, industrial and governmental organization. Some of the anticipated accomplishments of this program are:

(1) To expose students to the wide range of job possibilities both inside and out of the indentified academic areas programmed by the colleges and high schools in the area.

(2) To help students to choose and prepare for satisfying occupations and to increase motivation.

(3) To help the school and student become more familiar with the education and training needed to pursue these occupations.

(4) To increase the level of aspiration, motivation, and goal direction of potential secondary and higher educational dropouts.

A brief summary of this year's career conference program shows that there were sixty-four (64) companies and agencies in attendance. The average conference participant had contacts with twenty-two (22) students. Actual numbers of students contacted ranged from 6 to 100 per company or agency.

Following the career conference, the single most dynamic factor of the career planning design is the individual counseling interview. Our objective here is three fold: First, to assist the student into gaining awareness of his abilities and goals; secondly, to help to relate the educational experience of the individual and the world of work as complimentary rather than as isolated experiences; and thirdly, to help provide the impetus for realistic occupational choices derived from awareness, investigation and decision making.

Vocational Counseling is structured to reach the student as early as possible in his academic life. The service is offered to all underclassmen and is a voluntary college activity. The Office of Career Planning and Placement makes this service available through the medium of college newspaper articles, attractive posters placed around the campus, and dormitory and group presentation by the placement staff.

Referrals from academic departments and the academic counseling office also contribute to the vocational counseling load. Any student, with a minimum of effort can avail himself of the vocational counseling services.

An intergral part of the vocational counseling service is the testing program. The testing program is designed to aid the student and staff member to equip the student for making a better career choice. This program involves ability and intelligence measurement, interest inventories, occupational aptitude testing, and attitude measurement for specific career fields. Testing is only viewed as a possible index of a problem area. Keeping this in mind, the placement staff attempts to interweave those measurable characteristics with what the student perceives to be a realistic impression of himself. The end result is a more accurate occupational orientation based on what qualities the student posesses and what will be demanded of him in his chosen occupation.

Another component of the vocational counseling service is the occupational information library. In the counseling relationship, the library is used as a resource in the exploration and orientation of career fields. Once the student has reached a tentative determination in terms of possible career choices, he may use the library facility to explore the entire realm of the world of work. To augment this occupational information service, the office disseminates information relative to specific academic areas to each academic department.

Each department is encouraged to maintain bulletin board space to display career oriented material that is relevant to the students' course work. This process helps the student to associate his educational experiences with careers, thereby enabling both instructor and student to become more attuned to the end product of the educational process.

Another method that has proven very effective in the career planning and counseling program has been the Recent Graduate Orientation Program. Recent graduates of Delaware State are invited back to campus to present the facts of the actual job experience in their chosen career field. This candid exchange of ideas between student and alumni gives the black student, in most cases, an accurate evaluation of career possibilities. These presentations are more commonly achieved through group counseling or discussions, and recently, through the career conference. In addition, the placement staff has made whenever possible home office or plant visits to exchange ideas with recent grads, other black employees, and management personnel.

We have discussed the business and industrial trends in the recruitment of black students, and we have touched upon the methods by which we hope to prepare the black student for an eventual career choice. But what of this entity, the black student? What are his aspirations, potential for success, choices of possible career fields?

Recently our office conducted a survey in order to ascertain the black students' knowledge of industrial organization, his career aspirations, aggressiveness, and potential for success.

The method used was an interview rating form (5 point scale, excellent - poor) which was completed by the campus recruiter after interviewing each student. The following survey is based on 605 actual interviewing sessions with black students.

In Knowledge of Industrial Organization which might be construed as directly attributable to career planning:

40 percent Excellent-Good

36 percent Average

24 percent Fair-Good

Career Aspirations:

57 percent Excellent-Good

30 percent Average

13 percent Fair-Poor

Aggressiveness:

53 percent Excellent-Good

35 percent Average

12 percent Fair-Poor

Potential for Career Success:

52 percent Excellent-Good

36 percent Average

12 percent Fair-Poor

Generally, in all areas of aspiration, aggressiveness, and potential, over half of the black students were rated good to excellent. It was determined that the reason that 60 percent of the students fell in the average or below area of Knowledge of Industrial Organization was due to the fact the most did not read the recruiting literature.

Considering black students' motivational problems, what is the employment outlook as the student sees himself and what is his perception of the world of work?

The industry distributions that appeal to black students as a possible career choice are ranked in the order of number of students who sign-up for interviews. The following percentages are based on 737 sign-ups for 155 recruiting concerns on Delaware State College campus from October, 1969, thru March, 1970.

Banking, Finance, Insurance	20	Automotive Manufacturing	6
Electronics/Instruments	15	Petroleum and Products	5
Chemicals, Drugs, Allied Products	12	Utilities	4
Accounting/Public	10	Food and Beverage Processing	3
Government Service	7	Graduate School	3
Glass, Paper, Packing	7	Tire and Rubber	2
Merchandising	6		

The top four ranked industries listed representing 67% of all interviews reflect non-traditional careers for the black graduate.

The view of the black student however is of little value if it cannot be compared with other students under the same or similiar conditions. The non-black population of Delaware State College constitutes from 35 to 40 percent. How does the black student compare with the non-black student at a "predominantly black" institution?

In a similar survey of career oriented characteristics of white students, based on 210 interviewing sessions, white students compared equally with blacks in the areas of knowledge of industrial organization and aggressiveness. White students rated slightly higher in potential for success and slightly lower in career aspirations.

Conclusion

Any career planning design must be innovative and resourceful to be effective. The future functions and needs of career planning must become as diversified and complex as the people and organizations it serves. This function must keep abreast of what the students needs are and must be prepared to meet these needs. Presently, there is no definitive methodology in career planning. Programs must be initiated that get results or give structure for other courses of action. Research and evaluation must be carried out to determine the effectiveness of the on going career planning process. Career planning and placement, out of necessity, must become assimilated into the academic community, thereby becoming more involved in curriculum revision and modification of academic programs in congruence with the changes in the world of work. In short, career planning must summarily become an intergral part of the total educational experience from the first day the student sets foot on the campus.

DEVELOPING SPECIFIC CAREER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Prior to September, 1967, the Career Planning and Placement Center directed the biggest portion of its services to placement rather than career planning. With a change in staff, came a change in the overall philosophy and functions of services provided. Since July, 1969, when a third full-time professional staff member, the Program Coordinator, was added, the Center has given special attention to preparing the student for the world of work. A main part of the total placement program for the school year, 1969-1970, has emphasized the developing of new career educational programs and the revising of old ones to better meet the needs of the student.

The objectives underlying these special programs are to increase career awareness, to stimulate motivation and to increase sophistication in the interview situation.

The newest program is the Interview Workshop, which has as its main objective the increasing of the student's techniques and skills in the interview situation. This program made its debut in October, 1969. The one-day workshop embodied these aspects: a mock interview (role playing), film strips, discussions of aspirations and goals and interviewing techniques.

The mock interview was geared toward depicting the actual interview situation between the student and prospective employer. The student takes a simulated interview based at this point on his limited knowledge of taking an interview.

After the mock interview is completed, the entire interview situation is critically analyzed so as to give the students in attendance first hand insight of some of the most basic fundamentals of taking an interview. Another medium for giving the student insight is the use of film strips showing various types of interviewing situations.

Included in this past year's workshop were two actual interviewers from local industries. The role of these interviewers was to discuss and bring to light the interview from an employer perspective. Climaxing the program was a more than profitable question and answer period.

Incorporated also in the Interview Workshop were pointers on preparing impressionable resumes and composing effective and well organized business letters. This unique program was set up especially for seniors seeking employment after graduation, as well as, any other interested persons.

The Student Employment Service, added to the total program since 1967, has presented itself as a vital and functional service. The objective of the service is to provide a central bulletin board listing for on-campus and off-campus student jobs.

Department Heads and any person with hiring authority sends the office a notice of a job vacancy or vacancies, in turn the center assigns the notice a job number and posts it for inspection by interested students. The individual listing gives all pertinent information relative to that specific position, such as qualifications desired, person to contact, location of job, rate of pay.

This service does not include any screening or referral procedures; the student himself must make contact with the designated employer. This process duplicates the every day procedure by which one secures a job. The first endeavor of this specialized service met with overwhelming response from the students and employers.

Another aspect of the service is the off-campus job listings, which are handled in much the same manner as the on-campus jobs. The difference is that contact is made with community businesses, with the principle objective being to establish a service at no cost to business and build rapport between the college and the community.

Another program offered as a service in placement is that of on campus government testing. Many students are still attracted to government positions despite the competition offered by industry. With the exception of a few, most government positions available to college graduates require the Federal Service Entrance Examination (FSEE). Thus, as an added service to students, the Career Planning and Placement Center coordinates montly on-campus FSEE testing. The testing service has proven to be advantageous to both the student and the office. For the student, it means taking the exam without transportation problems. On the other hand, for the center it means rendering better service to the student desiring to take the examination. Especially advantageous to the program was a breakdown in test scores made available by special request to the Interagency Board of Civil Service Examiners. These breakdowns gave a clear picture of the strong and weak points of the students taking the test.

Also this enabled the respective departments to revise or modify their curricula so as to enhance the students' changes of successfully passing the FSEE.

Though it certainly is not new in Career Planning and Placement Services, teacher placement, currently is the most expanded service offered in the area of educational programs.

Contact is made early in the year with the prospective teachers. The center attempts to obtain general information on these students, such as when and where they would like positions. The information aids in determining what percentage of prospective teachers actually plan to teach and who will seek other positions. Also, the information aids in structuring the teacher placement program to better serve the prospective teacher in the future.

Special teacher registration forms have been designed to obtain all pertinent information on the prospective teacher in order to assist the interviewer in assessing the qualifications of the person interested in a teaching position. To further serve the prospective teacher, a monthly bulletin announces the visiting school systems. In addition, the Teacher Vacancy Binder, included in the center's Occupational Information Library, lists current and anticipated vacancies for hundreds of school systems throughout the United States and some foreign countries.

A teaching counseling service is also available for those who require such assistance. Other services include testing to determine teacher attitudes about the field.

The success of any service is determined by the degree of utilization. One of the tools for determining effectiveness is the graduate follow-up. Our questionnaire is structured so as to solicit a wide range of information on the graduate. Data obtained from the questionnaire enables the center to maintain a record and permanent file on the professional activity of the graduate. Also based on the questionnaire, the effectiveness of services offered by the center are assessed. In addition, from data received the current year, the center is able to plan for and employ improved and more meaningful services the following school year.

Another type of follow-up employed in the center is the alumni follow-up, which assists former graduates who wish to be informed of job opportunities of a more advance nature. Still another service is the Alumni Placement Bulletin which is a current listing of positions available throughout the U. S. and some foreign countries.

These then are components of our career educational programs. All of these have been initiated and developed since September 1967. These programs have been designed to offer services to the community, to the faculty and staff of the college and to students. It is our belief that involvement of this nature increases the total awareness of the career planning and placement services we offer.

Concluding Remarks

The placement office is, for the most part, a dying phenomenon on the college campus. Events of the past few years have been centered around the exclusion of certain companies and agencies from the facilities of the placement office. Many placement officials have been forced into defending their reason for continuing to occupy space in a campus building. Some have lost their fight and have been moved to a remote corner of the campus or, in some cases, have been abolished completely. It is very hard to defend the existence of what many faculty members regard as a mere employment agency. Still other faculty members regard the notion of preparing students for a vocation as repugnant to the educational process. A large portion of the blame for the position that placement officials have found themselves in lies in their inability to provide more than a mechanical service.

This is the death trap that the program at Delaware State is trying to avoid. We believe that we have made a fair beginning. Our philosophy of career planning is very easily woven into the entire educational process of the college. The staff of the office has its roots firmly placed in vocational counseling. We are, in fact, merely counselors who, as one of our functions, the placement of students.

We clearly have been fortunate in having adequate support to develop the program.

The need for a strong career planning program at a predominately black college cannot be questioned, for black students generally are still not convinced that the doors are as open as one is led to believe. This credibility gap makes the black student less aggressive, lowers his motivation, and creates aspirational problems. These are the types of problems we are helping the black student to overcome. The black student on the predominately white campus suffers from many of the same ailments as his counterpart on the black campus. We, however, have an advantage in that we do not have to search for our black students. I believe, however, that you must at least attempt to identify the student on your campus when he enters as a freshman. Your program must be one which offers continuous service to these students. This, admittedly, will not be an easy task. Effective counseling has never been an easy task.

Finally, if you will develop your program with the primary thought being service to the student, then your function will have the foundation necessary to withstand any challenge.